

The efficacy of Story boarding as an adjunctive tool for Case Analysis in Management Education

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ABSTRACT

Case Analysis has always been an effective tool used in management education. In order to continue to use the case analysis method of teaching but with a little twist the storyboarding method was introduced. This new addition to the case method has reaped several benefits not just in the cognitive development of the students but also in the behavioural improvements with several 21st century skills being strengthened.

Keywords: Case Analysis, Storyboards, Pedagogy, Management, HRM

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business landscape, managers are primed to navigate through a dynamic and turbulent world. This entails equipping themselves with a robust set of skills and attributes, including a high adversity quotient, to enable them to flourish in adverse and unpredictable circumstances. Proficient decision-making is a crucial competence that all managers must possess in order to effectively lead their teams and achieve their organisational goals. Selecting an appropriate pedagogical instrument is of paramount importance for an instructor in a managerial course. The selection of the appropriate tool addresses either a particular pedagogical methodology or the multitude of pedagogical methodologies available. When selecting or devising a tool, a facilitator may opt for any of the five widely used approaches, namely the constructivist, collaborative, inquiry-based, integrative, or reflective methodologies, either individually or in combination. Case analysis stands out as a prevalent pedagogical instrument employed in business schools globally. Management educators have underscored the efficacy of the case method, and instructors are encouraged to engage in case writing to further enrich the vast assortment of cases already accessible in every branch and domain of management. Case studies aid pupils in establishing a connection between theoretical principles and the practicality of the corporate arena, thereby fostering proficiency in analytical and critical thinking and enabling them to make sound judgments when confronted with a multitude of circumstances. Ever since its inception at Harvard Business School in 1920, case studies have augmented the instructional process, and pupils have reaped enhanced advantages as it kindles their inquisitiveness, prompting them to consider alternatives. This pedagogical approach steers the attention from the instructor to the learner, with the teacher serving solely as a facilitator.

In disciplines such as Human Resource Management, Organisational Behaviour, Marketing, Strategic Management, Entrepreneurship, and Industrial Relations, utilising case studies becomes imperative to facilitate comprehensive discussions of concepts and promote critical thinking toward devising solutions to identified issues. Employing the case method to teach HRM functions has consistently proven effective, invigorating the classroom with lively debates and discussions. The case analysis method, when employed in the classroom, facilitates learning at three distinct levels. At the individual level, participants internalise the fundamental tenets of the case and draw from their own experiences and knowledge; at the small group level, group discussions allow for the exploration and examination of new approaches to the case by participants; and finally, arriving at a resolution as a whole class necessitates additional elucidation and persuasion skills on the part of the participants. Enhanced classroom diversity fosters an intellectually stimulating environment, as it brings together a plethora of unique perspectives from the participants. Such experiences tend to leave a lasting impression on students, embedding theoretical concepts into their memory for years to come. However, considering the modern phenomenon of cognitive impatience, students of all ages often struggle with lengthy case studies. This presents a constant challenge for management college facilitators, who must continually devise innovative methods to enrich the teaching-learning process.

According to the Oxford dictionary, a storyboard can be defined as a sequential arrangement of illustrations or images that delineate the framework of a story or film. It comprises a sequence of squares or panels containing pictorial representations that elucidate the actions taking place, accompanied by a written script. Storyboards can be broadly classified into three categories, namely conventional storyboards, thumbnail storyboards, and digital storyboards.

Storyboards facilitate the creation of a visual narrative that ensures a consistent interpretation of the characters, leading to increased clarity in both the case and the potential solutions. Although primarily utilised by professionals in the film and video-making industries, storyboards have also found utility in language instruction by educators seeking to enhance students' reading abilities. Notably, there is a dearth of empirical evidence documenting the integration of storyboards in management instruction, particularly in conjunction with the case analysis approach. I employed storyboarding in my HRM class with the principal objective of encompassing all relevant pedagogical approaches, as opposed to the conventional case study method. The student cohort was partitioned into groups of six members each. Each group was allocated a distinct case study pertaining to various aspects of HRM. The cases presented were of a considerable length, spanning between 10-15 pages and featuring an extensive cast of characters in addition to the central protagonist. Before assigning the case study to each group, a succinct overview of the corresponding HRM function was provided in class, enabling the students to familiarise themselves with the relevant domain and associated theoretical underpinnings. Furthermore, the groups were allotted a generous four-day window to prepare their presentations. Each group was tasked with transforming the entire case into a storyboard format and delivering a comprehensive presentation to the class. Additionally, the groups were required to pinpoint the salient problem areas within the case and proffer viable solutions to address the identified issues.

The participants were enjoined to establish a connection between their theoretical comprehension and the case study, leveraging their insights to deliver an engaging and compelling presentation. The use of online tools such as Mentimeter was actively encouraged to solicit input from the audience regarding potential solutions and recommendations. The active participation of fellow students in this manner engenders a heightened sense of attentiveness and discernment, compelling them to carefully attend to the presentation and gain a deep understanding of the case before offering their responses to the queries raised. The storyboard methodology represents a highly effective supplement to the conventional approach of utilising case studies in the classroom, which typically involves small-group and whole-class discussions. The integration of technology to facilitate interactive case analysis engenders a heightened level of engagement and fosters the acquisition of valuable meta-skills critical to the development of management students prior to embarking upon their corporate careers. This instructional activity is equally engaging in both asynchronous and synchronous modalities, thus offering significant flexibility and adaptability to cater to diverse learning preferences and schedules. The fundamental objectives of utilising the storyboard as an adjunctive tool to the case study are diverse:

to facilitate a thorough going analysis of the case and delineate its pivotal problem areas; ii) to engender the formulation of appropriate solutions to the identified challenges; iii) to enable participants to develop comprehensible storyboards and present them to the class with clarity and precision; iv) to synthesise the relevant theoretical concepts in the suggested solutions to the case problem; and, finally, v) to foster collaborative teamwork among group members to achieve a cogent and effective resolution to the case conundrum through lively discussions. Providing feedback at the end of each presentation is an imperative aspect of the facilitation process, as it enables students to gain experience in both receiving and providing constructive feedback.

In addition, the facilitator can reinforce the theoretical framework of the case and relate it to the recommended solutions and the case itself. Encouraging audience feedback can also provide valuable insights and perspectives on the presented material. During the post-presentation discussion, when students were asked about the difficulties they faced while creating storyboards, most participants expressed their struggles with determining how to effectively convey the case through a visual medium. However, after brainstorming and utilising online tools such as Canva, they were able to collaboratively produce a satisfactory storyboard, reaching a consensus through discussions within their teams. A possible variation to this activity involves assigning each group a specific superhero character and instructing them to provide solutions to the case from the perspective of the assigned character. This variation enhances the students' understanding of personality traits and encourages them to empathise with the problem-solving orientation of the character.

The application of role plays, and management games is widespread in management colleges as pedagogical instruments. These tools can be used in conjunction with case studies, or they can be used independently. Role plays undoubtedly inject enthusiasm into the classroom and encourage active engagement; however, they can also result in disorder, making it difficult for the facilitator to achieve the primary learning objectives. Additionally, role plays can be misconstrued as mere entertainment, and their connection to theoretical concepts may not be fully understood. Management games are an immensely effective and engaging pedagogical tool, inspired by war games and the armed forces.

They are instrumental in enhancing participants' decisionmaking and critical-thinking abilities. However, it is imperative that the game is aligned with the learning objectives of the class and appropriate infrastructure facilities are available to facilitate the game. One limitation of management games is that they may not always foster creative thinking among participants. The incorporation of storyboarding as a pedagogical tool in management courses has been found to promote the acquisition of 21st-century competencies. This exercise offers participants the following direct benefits: 1. Enhancement of problem-solving acumen 2. Augmentation of critical thinking abilities 3. Development of

interpersonal communication proficiencies 4. Fostering of creativity by fusing innovative ideas with technology 5. Refinement of persuasion and influence skills 6. Improvement of decision-making faculties 7. Cultivation of collaborative aptitude 8. Stimulation of curiosity 9. Boost in self-assurance 10. Refinement of the case analysis.

The integration of storyboard and comic strip exercises in management classes offers a plethora of advantages to students. These exercises facilitate the development of 21st century skills, comprising problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, persuasion, decisionmaking, curiosity, and self-assurance, all while promoting student-centred learning. They also complement traditional case study approaches, particularly through small group and wholeclass discussions, to provide a well-rounded learning experience. By using comic strips as a presentation medium, students benefit from a stimulating and enriching learning experience, as revealed by student feedback. These exercises encourage students to showcase their creativity and attention to detail, furthering their analytical reasoning and sound judgement. Every case study that was analysed by students and presented in the form of a storyboard helped them develop vital interpersonal skills and clear communication, critical attributes for effective teamwork. Overall, it offers a promising opportunity to promote the development of essential skills and ensure a well-prepared future workforce.

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